

**PROTOCOL PROCESSING STACK FOR USE WITH INTELLIGENT
NETWORK INTERFACE DEVICE**

Peter K. Craft

Clive M. Philbrick

Laurence B. Boucher

David A. Higgen

Abstract of the Disclosure

A host CPU runs a network protocol processing stack that provides instructions not only to process network messages but also to allocate processing of certain network messages to a specialized network communication device, offloading some of the most time consuming protocol processing from the host CPU to the network communication device. By allocating common and time consuming network processes to the device, while retaining the ability to handle less time intensive and more varied processing on the host stack, the network communication device can be relatively simple and cost effective. The host CPU, operating according to instructions from the stack, and the network communication device together determine whether and to what extent a given message is processed by the host CPU or by the network communication device.